

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Wheels Service to the 2019 Alameda County Fair

FROM: Tony McCaulay, Director of Planning and Marketing
Cyrus Sheik, Senior Transit Planner

DATE: March 25, 2019

Action Requested

Approve a recommendation to operate a dedicated shuttle during the 2019 Alameda County Fair.

Background

This year's Alameda County Fair will be held between Friday, June 14 and Sunday July 7, 2019 at the Fairgrounds in Pleasanton. During this time, the event will be open Wednesdays thru Sundays, and operate between the hours of 11AM and 11PM. The Fair is a major event that draws visitors from across the Tri-Valley as well as other parts of Alameda County and the Bay Area.

Most fairgoers from outside the Tri-Valley that are taking public transportation to the event travel on BART and then transfer to a Wheels route to complete their trip to the Alameda County Fairgrounds, which is not within walking distance from a BART station.

Discussion

The accommodation of fairgoers on Wheels service has varied over the years. Through 2004, a dedicated BART shuttle was provided, whereas in most subsequent years the agency accommodated these trips by applying detours and extensions to one or more existing routes. However, the current route setup does not lend itself to detouring without substantial disruption and delays to regular service. As a result, for the past two years the Board of Directors has approved a return to a dedicated shuttle (Route 52), which was operated during the 2017 and 2018 fairs.

Dedicated Shuttle

Staff is again proposing a dedicated shuttle service between BART and the Fairgrounds for the 2019 County Fair, with similar parameters and budget as last year. The shuttle would be provided during 17 of the 18 days that the Fair will be open (no service would be provided on July 4), and run between the hours of approximately 10:30a and 11:30p. Using one bus, the service would operate hourly between the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station and the Pleasanton ACE bus stop on Pleasanton Avenue, which is located just across from the

Fairgrounds main entrance. Similar to the past two years, the shuttle would use Hopyard Road between BART and the Fair, and pick up at local bus stops in order to serve local fairgoers wishing to use the service as well. All regular Wheels fares and policies would apply to this service, and its schedule would be published through the same channels as that of regular Wheels routes as well as via additional dissemination through the Fair Association’s information channels.

The following table summarizes the parameters for the proposed repeat of the BART-Fair shuttle.

PROPOSED COUNTY FAIR SHUTTLE 2019	
General service parameters	
<i>Days operated</i>	June 14 thru July 7, excl Mon/Tue, and July 4
<i>Hours of operation</i>	10:30a--11:30p
<i>Frequency</i>	60 min
<i># Buses</i>	1
<i>Termini</i>	E Dublin BART / Ala Co Fairgrounds main entrance
<i>via</i>	Owens - Hopyard - Fair - Rose - Pleasanton v.v.
<i>Fare</i>	\$2.00 cash fare; regular Wheels discounts as appl.
<i>Local pickups allowed</i>	Yes

Estimated costs and contingencies. If approved, a dedicated shuttle service as outlined above would incur approximately 13 vehicle hours of service per day operated, for a total of 221 revenue hours. The following table summarizes the gross and net cost estimates for the proposed service.

PROPOSED COUNTY FAIR SERVICE 2019	
Cost estimate	
<i>Dedicated hourly shuttle Bart-Fairgrounds</i>	
Daily revenue hours	13.00
Number of days operated	17
Total revenue hours	221.00
Total fully allocated cost	\$24 082
Total estimated ridership	2 941
Estimated add'l fare revenue	\$3 823
Total net cost (est'd)	\$20 259

The fully allocated cost to operate the proposed shuttle is estimated at approximately \$24,100. Based on last year’s ridership, the service would be expected to see just short of 3,000 one-way passenger boardings, resulting in an estimated total net cost of \$20,250 after fare revenues.

Other Wheels Service Available to the Fair

Rapid Route 10R operates locally between the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART station and the Transit Center in Livermore, via downtown Pleasanton, from early morning to late evening, every day of the week. Serving a pair of bus stops on Peters Avenue, it is well suited for local Tri-Valley resident fairgoers who are familiar with navigating the short walk from Peters Avenue to the main Fairgrounds gate on Pleasanton Avenue. It would also be able to function as a “frequency filler” to the dedicated BART shuttle for out-of-area passengers who have a similar knowledge of the local downtown street network. Based on last year’s ridership analysis, the 10R would be estimated to carry an additional 160 one-way passenger boardings during the Fair.

Wheels Route 53 provides direct service between the West Dublin/Pleasanton station and the Fairgrounds. However, its primary purpose is to serve as a connector for ACE rail passengers transferring to/from BART, with trips and times are limited to match those of ACE. Without an augmentation in service, the Route 53 is of limited utility to fairgoers, and no measurable ridership increment was seen on this route during last year’s Fair.

Marketing and Coordination with the Fair Association

LAVTA staff and County Fair staff met in February to discuss continuation of the dedicated shuttle service. The fair staff was very supportive of continuing the service and committed to providing financial, marketing and in-kind support to help promote ridership and defray the cost of operation for LAVTA.

The Fair agreed to again provide prime space near the entrance to the horse track to display our Rideo bus, as well as space by the bus display for a tent and information booth. The Fair also agreed to pay for the printing of the Route 52 timetables and again provide our riders with special 2 for 1 admission tickets that will be made available on all Wheels and Rapid buses.

In past years, the Fair has promoted BART and Wheels separately. This year, the Wheels connection from BART will be an integrated message. An ad for our shuttle will also be in the rotation on the video display sign at the corner of Bernal and Valley. The Fair will also purchase advertising inside the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station directing riders to the location of the Fair Shuttle.

Budget

If approved, the 221 additional revenue hours associated with the proposed service will be incorporated with the concurrent budgeting process for the upcoming fiscal year, and will require no amendments.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Projects & Services Committee forward a recommendation to the Board of Directors to operate a dedicated, hourly shuttle service between the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART station and the Fairgrounds during the 2019 Alameda County Fair, as outlined above.